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Life Same For Most Workers

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WASHINGTON (UPI) — For most of the nearly 5 million persons who work for the United States government, life goes on pretty much as before even though a new President has office.

In the whole federal establishment there are only about 5,000 patronage and policy jobs to which President-elect John F. Kennedy can appoint the faithful and the able.

Half the other 99.9 per cent of government employees are in the military forces. The rest are civilians under civil service or some other "merit" employment system. Ranging from porters to cafeteria cooks, forest rangers, diplomatic code clerks, air traffic controllers and countless lawyers and scientists, few will change jobs or leave government service because of the change of man and political party in control of the White House.

Kennedy already has made considerable headway in appointing the high officials who will help shape policy and guide activities.

It will be a long time — more than a year — before Kennedy and his aides fill the estimated 5,000 jobs available to the President. One reason it will take so long is the sheer enormity of screening applicants and matching them to the jobs.

A second reason is that not all the jobs are immediately available. For example, the President appoints members of the regulatory agencies, such as the Civil Aeronautics Board and the Interstate Commerce Commission. It is normal for commissioners to serve until their terms expire. Usually only one seat on an agency comes up each year.

There are 35,000 postmasters in the country, all appointed by the President. But each is appointed permanently. So the President can name postmasters only as incumbents die, retire or resign.

In certain cases, Kennedy has said he will retain men in high government office who might otherwise resign, such as FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover and Narcotics Commissioner Harry J. Anslinger. Others have been around Washington fewer years but still have substantial reputations for competence. For example, Kennedy is retaining Austin W. Dulles, director of the Central Intelligence Agency, and Elmer B. Staats, deputy director of the budget.

Of the 2.4 million civilian employees of the three branches of government, about 36 per cent fall under the Civil Service System and can be removed from their jobs only for cause. Other "merit" systems govern the hiring, promotion and firing of most other employees. Separate merit systems are Central Intelligence Agency, Tennessee Valley Authority, foreign service, Atomic Energy Commission, Public Health Service and other agencies.